



What to do when you see a Lora



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President Donald J. Trump's name is printed on a stimulus check issued by the IRS to help combat the adverse economic effects of the new coronavirus outbreak in San Antonio, April 23, 2020. Associated Press

U.S. government is phasing out paper checks. Here's what that means for you

By FATIMA HUSSEIN
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government starts phasing out paper checks for most programs on Tuesday. The change, which was initiated through an executive order signed by President Donald Trump in March, will affect recipients of benefits including Social Security, Supplemental Security Income and tax refunds. Trump's Republican administration argues the shift of all payments and collections to electronic methods is designed to protect taxpayers from fraud and stolen checks, speed up processing and cut costs. But advocates fear that the shift will hurt marginalized Americans who lack access to digital services and may not even know this phase-out is coming. "A lot of claimants move around and don't always get their mail," says Jennifer Burdick, a divisional supervising attorney in the SSI Unit at Community Legal Services

in Philadelphia. "And the folks that I represent who get paper checks mostly learned from me about this transition." Roughly 10% of Burdick's clients receive paper checks. She worries that new recipients who need a paper check to open a checking account at a bank will find it difficult or even nearly impossible to get that done after the phase-out. Nearly 400,000 Social Security and SSI recipients receive their benefits through paper checks. That amounts to less than 1% of the 70.6 million retirees, disabled people and children who receive Social Security benefits. Instead of paper checks, they will receive a direct deposit or a Direct Express card, which is intended for people without a bank account. However, the Social Security Administration says it will still issue paper checks if no other options are available. "Where a beneficiary has no other means to receive payment, we

will continue to issue paper checks," the SSA says. Kathleen Romig, the director of Social Security and disability policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, notes that the people most affected by this change tend to be the most vulnerable, "often unbanked or unhoused, and lacking in the tools and skills they need to access digital services." There are reasons they haven't made the switch yet some people's mental health crises make them wary of financial institutions, and others simply don't have enough money to open a bank account. "This is a population that can't afford to miss a payment, so it's very important that the Trump administration manage the transition without interrupting their benefits," Romig said. Nancy Altman, president of Social Security Works, an advocacy group for the preservation of Social Security benefits, calls the phase-out of paper checks unnecessary. □

Florida officials gift prime Miami real estate for Trump's presidential library



Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is proposing that President Donald Trump's presidential library be built in a parking lot that is currently used by Miami-Dade College staff and faculty and is adjacent to the Freedom Tower, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025, in Miami. Associated Press

By KATE PAYNE
Associated Press/Report for America
TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Florida officials decided Tuesday to set aside nearly three acres of prime downtown Miami real estate next to the historic Freedom Tower as a potential site of the future presidential library of President Donald Trump. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Cabinet voted to give the parcel appraised at more than \$66 million to the foundation that's planning the president's post-administration archives, arguing that the property owned by the state-run Miami Dade College would provide a "greater benefit to the public" and "increase economic development activities" as Trump's library. It's the latest demonstration by top Florida Republicans of their loyalty to Trump, who has shifted the center of his political universe to his adopted home state. The property is flanked by glitzy condos in an iconic stretch of palm tree-lined Biscayne Boulevard, overlooking the waterfront park and across the street from the basketball arena that's home to the Miami Heat. Miami Dade College has used it as an employee parking lot. Under the state constitution, the gifting of certain state properties requires approval by a collective decision-making body comprised of the attorney general, the chief financial officer and the commissioner of agriculture as well as the governor. Tuesday's conveyance gives the Donald J. Trump Presidential Library Foundation, Inc., control over a developer's dream property. The foundation is led by three trustees: Eric Trump, Tiffany Trump's husband Michael Boulos, and Trump attorney James Kiley. □

Judge finds the Trump administration unconstitutionally targeted noncitizens over Gaza war protests

By **MICHAEL CASEY**
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The Trump administration violated the Constitution when it targeted non-U.S. citizens for deportation solely for supporting Palestinians and criticizing Israel, a federal judge said Tuesday in a scathing ruling directly and sharply criticizing President Donald Trump and his policies as serious threats to free speech.

U.S. District Judge William Young in Boston agreed with several university associations that the policy they described as ideological deportation violates the First Amendment as well as the Administrative Procedure Act, a law governing how federal agencies develop and issue regulations. Young also found the policy was “arbitrary or capricious because it reverses prior policy without reasoned explanation.”

“This case perhaps the most important ever to fall within the jurisdiction of this district court squarely presents the issue whether non-citizens lawfully present here in United States actually have the same free speech rights as the rest of us. The Court answers this Constitutional question unequivocally ‘yes, they do,’” Young, a nominee of Republican President Ronald Reagan, wrote.

The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Plaintiffs in the case welcomed the ruling.

“The Trump administration’s attempt to deport students for their political views is an assault on the Constitution and a betrayal of American values,” said Todd Wolfson, president of the American Association of University Professors union. “This trial exposed their true aim: to intimidate and silence anyone who dares oppose them. If we fail to fight back, Trump’s thought police won’t stop at pro-Palestinian voices—they will come for anyone who speaks out.”



Pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil chants during a rally celebrating his return from immigration detention, June 22, 2025, in New York.

Associated Press

The ruling came after a trial during which lawyers for the associations presented witnesses who testified that the Trump administration had launched a coordinated effort to target students and scholars who had criticized Israel or showed sympathy for Palestinians.

“Not since the McCarthy era have immigrants been the target of such intense repression for lawful political speech,” Ramya Krishnan, senior staff attorney at the Knight First Amendment Institute, told the court. “The policy creates a cloud of fear over university communities, and it is at war with the First Amendment.”

Young will hold a separate hearing on the relief requested by the plaintiffs, which is likely to be a request that the Trump administration stop engaging in ideological deportations.

Lawyers for the Trump administration put up witnesses who testified there was no ideological deportation policy as the plaintiffs contended.

“There is no policy to revoke visas on the basis of protected speech,” Victoria Santora told the court. “The evidence presented at this trial will show that plaintiffs are challenging

nothing more than government enforcement of immigration laws.”

John Armstrong, the senior bureau official in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, testified that visa revocations were based on long-standing immigration law. Armstrong acknowledged he played a role in the visa revocation of several high-profile activists, including Rumeysa Ozturk and Mahmoud Khalil, and was shown memos endorsing their removal.

Armstrong also insisted that visa revocations were not based on protected speech and rejected accusations that there was a policy of targeting someone for their ideology. □

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U.S. government on brink of first shutdown in almost 7 years during partisan standoff

By **MARY CLARE JALONICK, LISA MASCARO and STEPHEN GROVES**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a government shutdown just hours away, Democrats and Republicans angrily blamed each other and refused to budge from their positions Tuesday, unable to find agreement or even negotiate as hundreds of thousands of federal workers stood to be furloughed or laid off.

The partisan standoff over health care and spending is threatening to trigger the first U.S. government shutdown in almost seven years at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday. To avoid it, the Senate would have to pass a House measure that would extend federal funding for seven weeks while lawmakers finish their work on annual spending bills.

A vote on the bill, along with a Democratic alternative, was scheduled for early evening. But a resolution appeared far off as tempers flared, increasing the odds of a shutdown by the hour.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Republicans are trying to "bully" Democrats by refusing to negotiate on an extension of health care benefits and other priorities. "It's only the president who can do this. We know he runs the show here," Schumer said Tuesday morning, after a bipartisan White House meeting the day before yielded little progress. "Republicans have until midnight tonight to get serious with us," Schumer said. President Donald Trump and his fellow Republicans say they won't entertain any changes to the legislation, arguing that it's a stripped-down, "clean" bill that should be noncontroversial.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said Republicans "are not going to be held hostage" by the Democrats' demands. The GOP-led House was on a weeklong recess, unavailable for immediate votes



A partisan standoff over health care and spending is threatening to trigger the first U.S. government shutdown in almost seven years, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025.

Associated Press

even if the Senate did find bipartisan agreement. And far from entering into negotiations, Trump instead posted a fake, mocking video of Democrats on Monday evening after the White House meeting.

On Tuesday, Trump threatened retribution, saying a shutdown could include "cutting vast numbers of people out, cutting things that they like, cutting programs that they like." It was still unclear if either side would blink before the deadline.

Blame game escalates

While partisan stalemates over government spending are a frequent occurrence in Washington, the current impasse comes as Democrats see a rare opportunity to use their leverage to achieve policy goals and as their base voters are spoiling for a fight with Trump. Republicans who hold a 53-47 majority in the Senate would likely need at least eight votes from Democrats to end a filibuster and pass the bill with 60 votes, since Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky is expected to vote against it. Still, Schumer said Trump and Republicans would be to blame if the government shuts down. A handful of Democrats said they

were still deciding how to vote, holding out for a last-minute compromise. Thune said he is "hoping there are Democrats out there who are reasonable and understand what's at stake here." The last shutdown was in Trump's first term, from December 2018 to January 2019, when he demanded that Congress give him money for his U.S.-Mexico border wall. Trump retreated after 35 days the longest shutdown ever amid intensifying airport delays and missed paydays for federal workers.

Democrats' health care asks

Millions of people could face higher insurance premiums if the health care subsidies expire at the end of the year. Congress first put them in place in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to expand coverage for low- and middle-income people who purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

Democrats say they want the subsidies immediately extended. They have also demanded that Republicans reverse the Medicaid cuts that were enacted as a part of Trump's "big, beautiful bill" this summer and for the White House to

promise it will not move to rescind spending passed by Congress.

"We are not going to support a partisan Republican spending bill that continues to gut the health care of everyday Americans," House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said.

Thune has pressed Democrats to vote for the funding bill and take up the debate on tax credits later. Some Republicans are open to extending the tax credits, but many are strongly opposed to it.

In rare, pointed back-and-forth with Schumer on the Senate floor Tuesday morning, Thune said Republicans "are happy to fix the ACA issue" and have offered to negotiate with Democrats if they will vote to keep the government open until Nov. 21.

No agreement at the White House

The bipartisan meeting at the White House on Monday was Trump's first with all four leaders in Congress since retaking the White House for his second term. Schumer said the group "had candid, frank discussions" about health care and the potential for health insurance costs to skyrocket once expanded Affordable Care Act tax credits

expire Dec. 31.

But Trump did not appear to be ready for serious talks. Hours later, he posted a fake video of Schumer and Jeffries taken from footage of their real press conference outside the White House after the meeting. In the altered video, a voiceover that sounds like Schumer's voice makes fun of Democrats and Jeffries stands beside him with a cartoon sombrero and mustache. Mexican music plays in the background.

At a news conference on the Capitol steps Tuesday morning, Jeffries said it was a "racist and fake AI video." Schumer said that "we have less than a day to figure this out" and Trump is trolling on the Internet "like a 10-year-old."

A critical, and unusual, vote for Democrats

Democrats are in an uncomfortable position for a party that has long denounced shutdowns as pointless and destructive, and it's unclear how or when it would end. But party activists and voters have argued that Democrats need to do something to stand up to Trump.

Some groups called for Schumer's resignation in March after he and nine other Democrats voted to break a filibuster and allow a Republican-led funding bill to advance to a final vote.

Schumer said then that he voted to keep the government open because a shutdown would have made things worse as Trump's administration was slashing government jobs. He says now that he believes things have changed, including the passage this summer of the massive GOP tax cut bill that reduced Medicaid.

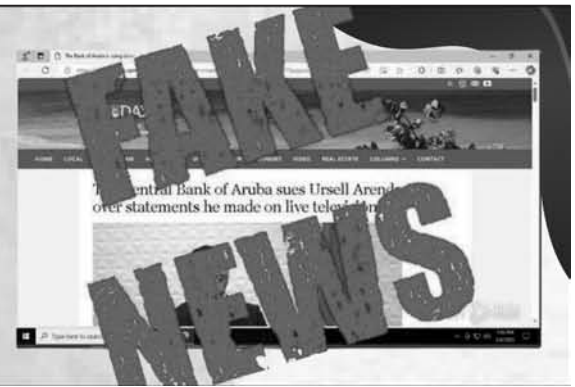
Shutdown preparations begin

The stakes are huge for federal workers across the country as the White House told agencies last week that they should consider "a reduction in force" for many federal programs if the government shuts down. □

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FBI boss Kash Patel gave New Zealand officials 3D-printed guns illegal to possess under local laws

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY and JIM MUSTIAN
Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — On a visit to New Zealand, FBI Director Kash Patel gave the country's police and spy bosses gifts of inoperable pistols that were illegal to possess under local gun laws and had to be destroyed, New Zealand law enforcement agencies told The Associated Press.

The plastic 3D-printed replica pistols formed part of display stands Patel presented to at least three senior New Zealand security officials in July. Patel, the most senior Trump administration official to visit the country so far, was in Wellington to open the FBI's first standalone office in New Zealand.

Pistols are tightly restricted weapons under New Zealand law and possessing one requires an additional permit beyond a regular gun license. Law enforcement agencies didn't specify whether the officials who met with Patel held such permits, but they couldn't



In this photo released by the US Embassy in Wellington, New Zealand, FBI Director Kash Patel cuts the ribbon at the official opening of the FBI office in Wellington, New Zealand, July 31, 2025.

Associated Press

have legally kept the gifts if they didn't.

It wasn't clear what permissions Patel had sought to bring the weapons into the country. A spokesperson for Patel told the AP Tuesday that the FBI would not comment.

The pistols were surrendered and destroyed

Inoperable weapons are

treated as though they're operable in New Zealand if modifications could make them workable again. The pistols were judged by gun regulators to be potentially operable and were destroyed, New Zealand's Police Commissioner Richard Chambers told AP in a statement Tuesday.

Chambers didn't specify

how the weapons had been rendered inoperable before Patel gifted them. Usually this means the temporary disabling of the gun's firing mechanism. Three of New Zealand's most powerful law enforcement figures said they received the gifts at meetings July 31. Chambers was one recipient, and the

other two were Andrew Hampton, director-general of the country's human intelligence agency NZSIS, and Andrew Clark, director-general of the technical intelligence agency GCSB, according to a joint statement from their departments.

A spokesperson for the spy agencies described the gift as "a challenge coin display stand" that included the 3D-printed inoperable weapon "as part of the design." The officials sought advice on the gifts the next day from the regulator that enforces New Zealand's gun laws, Chambers said.

When the weapons were examined, it was discovered they were potentially operable.

"To ensure compliance with firearms laws, I instructed Police to retain and destroy them," Chambers said.

James Davidson, a former FBI agent who is now president of the FBI Integrity Project, a nonprofit that seeks to safeguard the bureau from undue partisan influence, has criticized Patel's appointment. □

South Africa's ambassador to France is found dead in Paris

PARIS (AP) — The South African ambassador to France, Emmanuel Nkosingithi Mthethwa, known as Nathi Mthethwa, was found dead on Tuesday morning at the foot of a luxury hotel tower in western Paris, a French prosecutor said.

The 58-year-old ambassador had been reported missing on Monday evening, after his wife said she received a worrying message from him "in which he apologized and expressed his intention to take his own life," Paris prosecutor Laure Beccuau said in a statement.

On Tuesday morning, a security guard at the Hyatt hotel discovered Mthethwa's body in the inner courtyard, Beccuau said, adding an investigation has been opened.

Mthethwa had booked a room on the

22nd floor of the hotel, where the window's safety mechanism had been forced open, Beccuau said.

The statement said investigators found no signs of a struggle, nor traces of medication or illegal drugs.

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa expressed his sadness at the death of Mthethwa "in tragic circumstances."

In a statement released by his office, Ramaphosa offered his deep condolences to Mthethwa's wife and family.

South Africa's foreign ministry said Mthethwa had been appointed ambassador to France in December 2023, tasked with strengthening bilateral ties.

Mthethwa previously served as minister of police and minister of sports, arts and culture. □



View of the Hyatt hotel, center, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025 in Paris after the South African ambassador to France, Emmanuel Nkosingithi Mthethwa, known as Nathi Mthethwa, was found dead.

Associated Press

U.N. authorizes a much larger force to fight gangs in Haiti with new power to detain gang members

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) —

The U.N. Security Council voted Tuesday to authorize a much larger, 5,550-member international force to help stop escalating gang violence in Haiti.

The resolution co-sponsored by the United States and Panama will transform the current Kenya-led multinational force into a "Gang Suppression Force" with the power to detain suspected gang members, which the current force does not have.

The vote was 12-0 with Russia, China and Pakistan abstaining.

The first Kenyans arrived in Haiti in June 2024, and the force was supposed to have 2,500 troops, but it has been plagued by a lack of funding and its current strength is below 1,000. Gangs have grown in power since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. They now control 90% of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and have expanded their activities, including looting, kidnapping, sexual assaults and rape, into the



People look out at a street in the Simon-Pele neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Monday, Sept. 22, 2025.

Associated Press

countryside. Haiti has not had a president since the assassination.

The seven-page draft resolution expresses appreciation to Kenya for leading the multinational force but reaffirms Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' finding in February that it hasn't been able to keep pace with the dramatic expansion of the

gangs and needs to be scaled up. The resolution authorizes U.N. member nations to transition to a Gang Suppression Force in cooperation with Haiti's government for an initial period of 12 months.

It states that the force would consist of 5,500 uniformed personnel and 50 civilians who would be

paid from voluntary contributions.

Laurent Saint-Cyr, leader of Haiti's transitional presidential council, cheered the vote on Tuesday.

"This vote marks a decisive turning point in the fight against armed criminal groups that are causing grief for our families, paralyzing our economy and

threatening the future of our nation," he said.

Saint-Cyr said he was grateful to council members who supported the resolution and thanked the U.S. and Panama for spearheading the initiative.

The U.S. Embassy in Haiti said it welcomed the newly approved resolution.

"The work is far from over, but this is a positive step towards restoring baseline security in Haiti," it said. "The message from the UNSC is clear: the era of impunity for those who seek to destabilize Haiti is over."

Haitian Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé said he supported the decision to transform the current mission into a so-called "gang-suppression force."

"In a context of armed violence that threatens the country's peace and stability, this new force sends a strong signal: Haiti is not alone," he said. "Together with our partners, we are determined to break the grip of gangs, restore state authority, secure our citizens, and create the conditions for free, fair, and transparent elections." □

Ukraine begins sharing drone expertise with Denmark deployment, Zelenskyy says

By ILLIA NOVIKOV

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The Ukrainian military is sharing with European countries its expertise in fighting Russian drones, sending a mission to Denmark for joint exercises, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday.

"Our military has begun deploying a mission in Denmark to disseminate Ukrainian experience in drone defense," Zelenskyy said.

European defense ministers agreed last week to build what they called a "drone wall" along their borders with Russia and Ukraine to better detect, track and intercept drones violating Europe's airspace.

Europe's readiness and technology are lagging far behind Ukraine and Russia, however, as cutting-edge drone warfare has become a hallmark of their three-year war since Mos-

cow's full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

"Ukrainian (drone) experience is the most relevant in Europe right now, and it is our experience, our specialists, and our technolo-

gies that could become a key element of the future European 'drone wall' a large-scale project that will guarantee safety in the sky," Zelenskyy added in a post on Telegram.

Denmark has in recent days reported drone sightings at military facilities and over Danish airports.

Danish intelligence officials, though careful not to directly accuse a specific country, said they regarded the risk of Russian espionage and sabotage in Denmark as high.

Poland has also turned to Ukraine for expertise after Russian drones entered Polish airspace.

"The results of the (Ukrainian) mission in Denmark will shape the framework for cooperation with other Eu-

ropean countries as well," Zelenskyy said.

The NATO military alliance is troubled, too, by European airspace violations by Russia warplanes that are further straining relations with Moscow and fueling fears that the fighting could spill beyond Ukraine's borders. At the same time, there is uncertainty about peace negotiations that were set in motion by the United States months ago but appear to be making no headway.

Ahead of two summits in the Danish capital Copenhagen this week, NATO is stepping up aerial surveillance in the Baltic Sea, while France, Germany and Sweden are bolstering Denmark's air defenses. □



A view of a drone flying prohibited sign at Halsskov, West Zealand, Denmark, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025.

Associated Press



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Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba



ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses.

Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side. There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the

first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you're wanting to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural

Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own. Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.



Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari

Known locally as Fisherman's Hut, here is where you will find most of the

action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities. □



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PSA from the Aruba Conservation Foundation: How to behave when you see a “lora”

(Oranjestad)—The conservation of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon, also known as the ‘Lora,’ relies on how we act as humans. We’ve seen many hikers who’ve encountered the ‘Lora’ in our protected nature areas and we can certainly imagine the pride and joy it brings to any Aruban. However, not everyone may know how to behave when encountering these clever and social birds. This guide is here to explain the behaviors that will most effectively help us in our efforts to conserve the ‘Lora.’ Please, don’t just read but also follow these guidelines so we can ensure the survival of these birds for future generations.



erations.

No interfering, please

Please refrain from interfering with the “Lora”. The Lora is a highly intelligent and social animal, perhaps slightly too friendly because they

have gotten used to the rangers as they prepared for their reintroduction. However, it is our collective responsibility to help them adapt to the wild once again. Please play your part by not interfering (calling, provok-

ing etc.) with the Lora. Simply enjoy their beauty from a safe distance.

Be respectful and keep cats and dogs away

Pets and strays such as cats and dogs are prone to attacking other animals, especially birds, as part of their natural instincts. Please make sure your pets are kept inside of your yard or are kept on a leash when going out for a walk.

Do not feed them food or water

You may think that giving them any food or water is doing a good deed, but it actually does not contribute to them developing

survival skills in the wild. By interfering with the survival instincts of wild animals, we are doing the opposite of helping. Therefore, please do not attempt to give the Loras food or water.

Capturing a Lora is against the law!

The biggest threat to the Lora before their extinction in 1947 was caused by human activities including poaching and killing of the Lora. Let’s work collectively to prevent this from happening again. So when you see the Lora, enjoy their beauty from a distance and admire them as they flourish in the wild. ☐

Create museum memories

Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these locations.

Museum of Industry Aruba

Museum of Industry in San Nicolas, better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum presents the history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba’s industrial history which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank

at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments fund in 2003 so it could be restored and preserved as one of Aruba’s monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Fundacion Museo Arubano (FMA), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban culture sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 1 pm.

For more information check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in downtown Oranjestad has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba’s Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially

designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980’s AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The “Ecury Complex”, is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997 the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004 a financial agreement was signed with the European



Development Fund and in 2006 restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the new to build exhibition space. In December 2007 the key to the complex was delivered and the museum’s employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This

exhibit conveys through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts an attractive public program including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm.

For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. ☐

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Fun facts about cacti hedges “Trankera”

(Oranjestad) – When off-roading in inland Aruba, you may notice some cacti hedges around various properties or lined up by certain pathways. These man-made hedges are called “trankera” and play an important role in maintaining our flora and fauna.

The trankera dates to colonialism, where settlers established several ‘cunucu’ (farm) on the island. People either used stone walls or trankera as a fence to ward off strangers and wild animals that can feed on the cunucu vegetation or cattle.

Nowadays, trankeras are less common, and those that still stand are often not maintained. On the surface this seems like a bad development, however this proved to be beneficial for our flora and fauna. Naturally developed flora around the hedges offers more shelter for fauna. Another aspect is the propagation process. When pruning hedges, flowers and seeds were removed, which limits propagation to a minimum.

So, though trankeras don't play that big of a role in Aruba's agriculture anymore, our environment still reaps the benefits of these long-standing natural structures. □



Beaches for the whole family to enjoy!

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when traveling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children



play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach sites, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-

rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingos up close! □



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCXXIII - 323

Goats, Donkeys, and the Living Heritage of Aruba

The narratives of Etnia Nativa advocate for the ethnic origins of Aruba, rooted in the revival of the island's identity and cultural heritage. Through this platform, we share authentic Indigenous perspectives, educate the public, and inspire readers to embrace their role as caretakers of the island.

In this episode, we explore a lesser-known chapter of Aruba's past—one that predates modern visitors seeing donkeys trotting along the roads or goats grazing in the arid countryside. These animals are not recent arrivals; they have been part of Aruba's colonial landscape and cultural history for centuries.

Both goats and donkeys were introduced during the colonial period, brought to the island by the Spanish through trade. They quickly adapted to Aruba's harsh environment and, over time, became inseparable from its rural identity and way of life.

Goats, in particular, have proven remarkably resilient. On an island of rocky hills and dry scrubland, few animals thrive as effortlessly. Agile and resourceful, they navigate steep slopes with ease, feed on thorny bushes and undergrowth, and sometimes even rest in the branches of watapana trees.

Their grazing habits are not only adaptive but also beneficial. By keeping dense vegetation in check—especially in hard-to-reach areas—goats help maintain ecological balance. Their day begins at dawn, often hydrating with morning dew before the sun grows intense. Despite their origins in colder regions, goats have acclimated well to Aruba's dry climate—so well, in fact, that humidity poses a greater threat to

their health than heat.

For more on their evolution and cultural significance, see Episode 187: "Our Cabrito."

Another quiet survivor of this desert island is the donkey. Like the goat, the donkey has a remarkable history of endurance. Native to arid regions, they were well-suited to Aruba's desert-like environment. Their slow metabolism and efficient water retention enabled them to survive long periods without drinking—a vital trait on an island where fresh water was once scarce.

Beyond their endurance, donkeys played a practical role in early Aruban life. They were used for transportation, and their manure served as a valuable agricultural resource. In times when currency was scarce, donkeys themselves became a form of trade—an indicator of wealth and a vital part of the island's economy.

For a deeper look at their role on the island, visit Episode 255: "Donkeys—Their Arrival on Aruba."

Unlike goats, however, donkeys are sensitive to temperature fluctuations and do not tolerate cold or humidity well. Aruba's consistently warm, dry climate has allowed them to thrive. Even today, semi-wild donkeys roam the countryside—often mistaken for strays,



though they are part of a long-standing lineage of free-roaming animals.

Living Symbols of Heritage

Goats and donkeys are far more than picturesque elements of Aruba's landscape—they are living symbols of the island's colonial past and agricultural traditions. Their presence connects us to a time when survival depended on resilience, adaptability, and a deep harmony with nature.

So the next time you see a goat perched on a rocky ledge or a donkey making its way across a cactus-studded plain, pause for a moment. Consider the journey that brought them here—and how perfectly they now belong.

If you enjoyed learning about our ancestral stories and want to explore the true identity of the Aruban people firsthand, we invite you to visit Etnia Nativa—the only "living museum" of its kind in the Caribbean, reflecting the island's rich mestizaje (cultural blending).

Founded in 1994, Etnia Nativa's creator has been a cultural pioneer, co-founding key institutions such as Aruba's National Park, the Archaeological Museum, several artisan foundations, and other community-based initiatives.□

But Etnia Nativa isn't just a place — it's a gateway. Quietly tucked away near the high-rise hotels, this private residence also serves as a cultural sanctuary, unknown to most tourists. And that's part of its magic. Intentionally exclusive, it welcomes only those with a genuine curiosity and a thirst for authentic discovery.

Connect with the spirit and soul of Aruba's ancient heritage through a one-of-a-kind experience.

WhatsApp: +297 592 2702 or
Email: etnianativa03@gmail.com



Did you know about... Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 2)



In Yesterday's issue, we've provided some basic rules when driving on the four-lane highways and roundabouts on the island. Today, we want to offer you more tips and tricks when it comes to driving on the roads and highways of Aruba.

Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle

or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out.

Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on

the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your

right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

Picture credits: aruba-travelguide.com

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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Concert venue
6 Component
11 Musical closes
12 Zeal
13 Sleeps in a tent
14 Third letter
15 Part of a student's email address
16 Lupino of film
18 High times
19 Confessional topic
20 Collins base
21 Originally called
22 Arizona city famed for its red rocks
24 Tacks on
25 Speeds up
27 — alone (do without help)
29 Without contract
32 Maximum amount
33 French friend
34 Mess up
35 Rap's — Nas X
36 Food additive letters

37 Compass dir.

- 38 Egg-shaped
40 Exodus figure

42 Squad car

43 "Give it —!"

44 Grant's successor

45 Kinds

DOWN

- 1 Get at
2 Concert worker
3 Famed mountain-eer
4 Catch some z's
5 Gives, as tasks
6 Heathen

- 7 Writer Levin

- 8 "The Faerie Queene" poet

- 9 Admitted for free

- 10 Wipes out plankton

- 23 Feedbag bit

- 24 Solution: Abbr.

- 26 Puzzles

- 27 Rubber's kin

- 28 Oscar winner Colman

- 30 Writer Hemingway

- 31 Waves' peaks

- 33 Church replies

- 39 Casual top

- 41 Spanish gold

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11						12			
13						14			
15				16	17			18	
19				20				21	
22			23				24		
	25				26				
27	28				29			30	31
32				33				34	
35				36				37	
38			39			40	41		
42						43			
44						45			

10-6

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-6

CRYPTOQUOTE

B M D Y V M I Z Z G U U X Z U R V O

F U I , S Y F S U P P F H A U I D

D Y V O D H P O ? — H M P B N H X

W P U R V P A

Cryptoquote: SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO EXPLORE THE DARKNESS TO GET BACK TO THE LIGHT AND GET BACK TO WHO YOU ARE. — JENNIFER LOPEZ

Cruise ship Schedule: Oct. 01 - 12 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	CALLS
WED	01	FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SUN	05	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	07	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA	07.00 13.00	16.00 23.00	B C	1 1
WED	08	GRAND PRINCESS RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS FREEWINDS	08.00 08.00 06.00	18.00 23.00 ****	B C E	1 1 1
THU	09	SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
SUN	12	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

	3			2			1	
6		9						
4							5	6
						5		4
	7		8		9			
								8
3		5			2		9	
9	4				1	3		
	2	1	3		6	4		5

Difficulty: ★★★

10/1

Answer to previous puzzle

7	5	1	4	2	6	8	3	9
4	3	2	7	9	8	1	6	5
6	9	8	1	3	5	2	7	4
1	7	6	9	8	2	4	5	3
3	8	4	5	6	1	9	2	7
9	2	5	3	7	4	6	8	1
2	1	9	6	5	7	3	4	8
8	4	7	2	1	3	5	9	6
5	6	3	8	4	9	7	1	2

Difficulty: ★★

9/30

DoorDash is expanding into restaurant reservations and robot deliveries



DoorDash Unveils Dot, the Delivery Robot Powered by its Autonomous Delivery Platform to Accelerate Local Commerce. Associated Press

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and
MICHAEL LIETKE
AP Business Writers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — DoorDash is expanding its offerings, adding restaurant reservations and robot deliveries in some U.S. markets. The San Francisco-based company, already the largest U.S. delivery provider, announced its expansion plans Tuesday, saying it wants to bring even more business to the merchants it works with and stay ahead of ever-increasing customer demand. DoorDash's total orders jumped 20% to 761 million in the second quarter of this year. DoorDash's robots will bring new challenges to the company as

it takes on the responsibility for storing and maintaining the devices. But DoorDash Co-Founder Stanley Tang said the company needs more delivery options to help fuel its future growth. "The shift to autonomy is happening right now, and DoorDash is uniquely positioned to do something like this," Tang said Monday during an interview at the company's San Francisco headquarters. □

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San Nicolas	584 5000
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Red Cross	582 2219

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Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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Narcotics Anonymous
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

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Downtown

Amazon unveils new generation of AI-powered Kindle and other devices

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Online juggernaut Amazon Inc. unveiled its next generation of Kindle, Ring and Echo devices, among other gadgets, that are all powered by artificial intelligence and connected to Alexa+, its AI-infused personal assistant, which made its debut in February.

The lineup, announced at a presentation and showcase in New York, includes new cameras for its Ring video monitoring device with a new AI facial recognition feature that allows users to register friends and family and notify them who is at the front door. Amazon unveiled four new Echo devices revamped with Alexa+ that serve up personalized insights like whether the user left the front door unlocked after midnight. The Seattle-based company also announced a series of Alexa+-infused Fire TVs that offer more personalized searches like finding a specific scene in a movie or getting commentary about last night's football game. The presentation Tuesday was the first big product event for Panos Panay, who joined Amazon in 2023 to head up the company's devices and services teams after a 19-year career at Microsoft where he served as chief product officer.

Panay told the audience of several hundred journalists



Panos Panay, senior vice president of devices and services at Amazon, speaks during an Amazon event in New York, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025.

Associated Press

and bloggers that Alexa+ and artificial intelligence are allowing technology to work "in the background when you don't."

"Products creating subtle shifts in all our behavior, driven by AI, integrated into the hardware," Panay said.

"And flowing natural through the products themselves. Whether it's a camera catching what you missed. Or your Fire TV updating you on a game. Or your Kindle remembering exactly where you left off."

The new lineup comes as Amazon has faced pres-

sure from investors to cater to the new AI era.

PP Foresight analyst Paolo Pescatore wrote in a note Tuesday that the offerings were "a much needed refresh to the lineup, as it was starting to look a bit dated." "Attention to detail may not grab headlines, but it should not be overlooked, especially how the products look and feel," he wrote. "The latest generation of devices is designed to blend into users' lives without them realizing they exist ... Alexa+ is clearly the glue that holds the stack together..."

Here are some highlights:

A more powerful doorbell:

Amazon has been expanding its home security features since the company bought Wi-Fi-connected cameras and doorbell maker Ring in 2018. Amazon said Tuesday that it's infusing the device with more technology and upgraded cameras that will transform the device into a doorbell attendant and community tool for pet owners among other new uses.

Amazon said the ring cameras with retinal vision now come with 2K resolution for sharper detail and 4K resolution video. Amazon's new AI facial recognition fea-

ture called "Familiar Faces," allows the user to register friends and family. The smart doorbell, infused with Alexa+, will also be able to manage deliveries and provide instructions for delivery workers among other tasks.

For pet owners, Amazon has a new feature that helps owners reunite lost dogs with their families. It works like this: a neighbor reports a lost dog in the Ring app, which would notify people nearby with a Ring camera. The cameras would then use AI to look for a possible match with the lost dog.

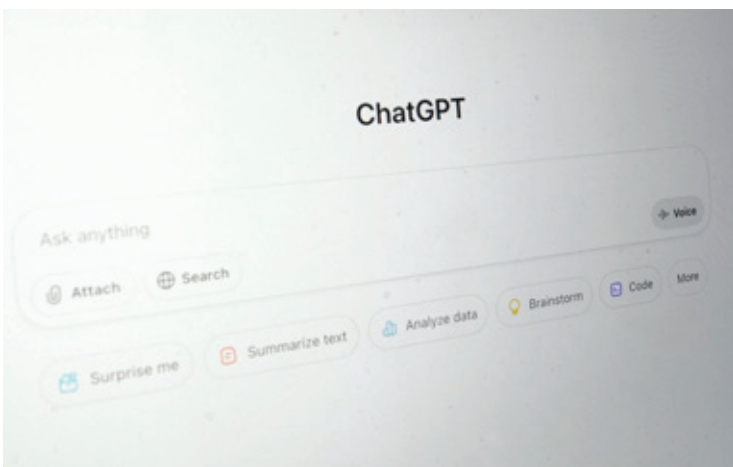
Ring Wired Doorbell Pro, priced at \$249.99 and wired doorbell plus, priced at \$179.99, among other Ring cameras, will be available for pre-order on Tuesday, Amazon said. Ring's "Search Party" for dogs will begin rolling out in November, followed by cats and other pets. And Alexa+ Greetings and Familiar Faces will be offered in December.

An updated lineup of Kindle Scribes:

Amazon unveiled new versions of the Kindle Scribe that the company touts as lighter and faster and features an AI-powered notebook search. One of them includes a color screen.

The new Scribes feature larger 11-inch, glare-free E Ink screens up from 10.2 inches previously. □

OpenAI's ChatGPT now lets users buy from Etsy, Shopify in push for chatbot shopping



Chat GPT's landing page is seen on a computer screen, Aug. 4, 2025, in Chicago.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — OpenAI is turning ChatGPT into a virtual merchant that can help sell goods for Etsy and Shopify as the artificial intelligence company looks for new revenue in online commerce.

ChatGPT users can now buy directly from Etsy sellers while interacting with the chatbot and will soon be able to do the same with Shopify sellers.

Competing with the likes of Amazon and Google for purchase fees from digital shopping could be a new source of money for OpenAI. The company hasn't made a profit and has relied on investors to back the costs of building and running its powerful AI systems.

OpenAI said it is working with payments

company Stripe on the technical standards that will enable purchases through the "Instant Checkout" system.

A number of payment companies have been working with AI developers on so-called AI agents that, given a credit card, could find and make purchases on a shopper's behalf.

OpenAI said ChatGPT won't favor these items in its product results.

"When ranking multiple merchants that sell the same product, ChatGPT considers factors like availability, price, quality, whether a merchant is the primary seller, and whether Instant Checkout is enabled, to optimize the user experience," the company said in a statement. □



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The NHL season will feature Florida threepeat bid and a return to the Winter Olympics

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

The immense challenge of threepeating as Stanley Cup champion got even more difficult for the Florida Panthers when they lost their captain and arguably most important player for the next 7-9 months to a knee injury.

Even without Aleksander Barkov, the Panthers have a chance to do something no NHL team has done in more than 40 years. And in between the rest of the league trying to stop their dynasty, the world's best hockey players will return to the Olympics for the first time in over a decade, fresh off the wildly successful 4 Nations Face-Off that reminded fans just how good the game is on the international stage.

"If you're a hockey fan, it doesn't get any better," New York Rangers and U.S. Olympic team coach Mike Sullivan said. "It puts the sport that we love on display to the world."

The puck drops Oct. 7 on one of the most anticipated seasons in recent history, with Connor McDavid going into his final year under contract in Edmonton still chasing his first championship while also teaming with Sidney Crosby, Nathan MacKinnon and others who will try to bring another gold medal home to Canada. Before Olympic play opens in Milan, Italy, 909 NHL games will be played, then 403 more down the stretch after the two-week break before another chase for the Cup begins in April.

"It's a lot to look forward to," Tampa Bay defenseman Victor Hedman said.

"You've got to hit the ground running and be as good as you can from the



Florida Panthers' Matthew Tkachuk (19) raises the Stanley Cup after defeating the Edmonton Oilers in Game 6 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final in Sunrise, Fla., Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

Associated Press

start."

Panthers launch threepeat bid

Hedman and the Lightning won the Cup back to back in 2020 and '21. Crosby's Pittsburgh Penguins did it in '16 and '17. No team has gone back to back to back since the New York Islanders won four consecutive championships from 1980-83. During an offseason availability, Hedman joked, "They're not going to win three in a row" as he walked past Florida star Sam Reinhart, but who's betting against a team that has won 11 of 12 playoff series since trading for Matthew Tkachuk and hiring Paul Maurice as coach? Barkov's long-term injury, and Tkachuk likely missing the first two months after his own surgery gives the Panthers longer odds. They're now 11-1 to win it all, behind co-favorites Edmonton and Vegas as well as Carolina, Colorado and Dallas, according to BetMGM Sportsbook.

"Be the best you can be at the start of the season: That's all you can focus on," Reinhart said. "What we learned last year is throughout it, you kind of have that not necessarily doubt, but you kind of wonder if you're going to have it again, that juice, that energy. You just kind of trust that you'll find it when the time comes."

Champions usually suffer a bit of attrition, but with the salary cap increasing a record amount, Florida kept all three of its big three free agents: playoff MVP Sam Bennett, defenseman Aaron Ekblad and winger Brad Marchand, whose acquisition at the trade deadline paved the way for another parade in Fort Lauderdale. "They're the top dog right now," Carolina's Seth Jarvis said.

McDavid's Oilers and other contenders

Florida has won consecutive finals against McDavid and the Oilers with one of the best teams constructed since the NHL's cap era be-

gan in 2005.

Edmonton, with McDavid and longtime running mate Leon Draisaitl, is an 8-1 Cup co-favorite with Vegas. After Minnesota signed Kirill Kaprizov to a record-setting \$136 million contract just before the season started, all eyes are on McDavid, who could break the bank if he stays or goes.

"I have every intention to win in Edmonton that's my only focus maybe next to winning a gold medal with Canada," McDavid told reporters in Calgary in August.

"I want the group to be as focused and dialed in and ready to roll come Day 1 as possible.

We don't need any distractions."

The other rivals with shorter title odds than the Panthers are Jarvis' Hurricanes, MacKinnon's Colorado Avalanche and the Stars. Dallas reached the Western Conference final each of the past three years.

"It's just what do we have to

do to get over that hump?" Stars goaltender Jake Oettinger said. "We have pretty much same group of guy, and a lot of guys are entering their prime or in their prime right now and we feel like now's our time to do it."

Ovechkin and other story-lines

The league is full of other intriguing things to watch:

- Alex Ovechkin breaking Wayne Gretzky's career goals record in April was a highlight of last season. The 40-year-old Washington Capitals captain goes into the final year of his contract and maybe his final NHL season with needing only three goals to reach 900. "Knowing Ovi, it probably won't take that long," teammate Pierre-Luc DuBois said.

- While Crosby and the Penguins are languishing through a rebuild that sparks plenty of trade rumors, Sullivan taking over the Rangers is one of nine coaching changes league-wide. Fellow multiple-time Stanley Cup champion Joel Quenneville is also back behind a bench with Anaheim, his first job since the investigation into Chicago's 2010 sexual assault allegations.

- Auston Matthews said he is healthy going into the season, and that makes Toronto's captain a legitimate candidate to score 60 goals. Former Maple Leafs teammate Mitch Marner could also put up 100 points with the Vegas Golden Knights.

- New York Islanders No. 1 pick Matthew Schaefer headlines an intriguing rookie class that includes skilled Montreal winger Ivan Demidov and Washington's Ryan Leonard. □



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New York Yankees' Cam Schlitler pitches during the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Baltimore Orioles Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025, in New York.

Associated Press

Flamethrowers rule mound as right-hander average 4-seam fastball reaches 95 mph

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Flame-throwers ruled the mound in the major leagues this year, with the average four-seam fastball among right-handed pitchers reaching 95 mph for the first time.

Average velocity has in-

creased for seven straight seasons, ticking up 0.3 mph this year for right-handers, according to MLB Statcast. Among right-handed relievers, the average four-seamer was 95.6 mph. For all pitchers, four-seamers averaged 94.5 mph, an increase of 0.2 mph in 2024 and up from 91.9 mph when tracking started in 2008.

"You see electric arms all the time," New York Mets first baseman Pete Alonso said. "The thing now is there's more guys throwing 100."

Reliever Mason Miller, traded from Oakland to San Diego in July, reached 100 mph with a big league-high 422 pitches, 43.4% of the 972 he threw. He let loose the seven fastest pitches of the season, topping at a 104.2 mph offering to Arizona's Tyler Locklear that sailed high and outside on Aug. 5.

Cincinnati's Hunter Greene, a starter, had the second-most three-digit flamers at 296. There were 3,700 triple-digit pitches, up from 3,321 last year and second to a record 3,880 in 2023.

A max-effort culture dominates pitching development.

A study released by MLB last December concluded rising velocities, pitch shaping and emphasis on maximum effort are likely causes of the vast increase in pitcher injuries. MLB recently restricted offseason scouting of amateur players to discourage year-round training.

"In some cases without the velocity a player truly isn't going to take that next step, but with adding the

velocity there comes risk," Texas Rangers president of baseball operations Chris Young said ahead of the season.

Starters averaged 15.56 outs and 85 pitches this year, according the Elias Sports Bureau, down slightly from 15.65 and 85.5 in 2024. The figures have remained within the same narrow band since outs fell below 16 and pitches under 88 for the first time in 2019.

Average spin rate on four-seamers was a record 2,322 revolutions per minute, up from 2,297 last year and 2,239 when first measured in 2015.

Baseball's batting average was .245, up from .243 last year but remaining close to the low of .237 in 1968. There were just seven qualified hitters at .300 or higher, matching last year as the second-fewest above only the six in 1968. There were 55 in 1999.

Philadelphia's Trea Turner won the National League batting title with a record-low .304 average. Tony Gwynn's .313 for San Diego in 1988 had been the previous nadir.

Home runs rose to 1.16 per game from 1.12, down from a record high of 1.39 in 2019.

Stolen bases dropped to 3,440 in the third year of larger bases from 3,617 last year and 3,503 in 2023. There were 2,486 in 2022, the last season before rule changes limited pickoff attempts and enlarged bases to 18-inch squares from 15.

Strikeouts per team per game dropped to 8.36, its lowest since 2017, while walks increased slightly to 3.16. □

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